

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, CA

SUBJ: TEACHERS DEMONSTRATE, THREATEN DEFINANCE OF
NEW BACK-TO-WORK LEGISLATION

REF: QUEBEC 73

1. MASS DEMONSTRATION OF 10,000 QUEBEC TEACHERS WENT OFF AS SCHEDULED APRIL 8 OUTSIDE QUEBEC PARLIAMENT. AS PROTESTORS ANGRILY DENOUNCED GOVT "LEGISLATION INSTEAD OF NEGOTIATION", NATION ASSEMBLY WAS DEBATING PROVISIONS OF BACK-TO-WORK BILL. SLIGHTLY AMENDED LAW WAS PASSED, BUT WILL NOT TAKE EFFECT UNTIL APRIL 11. UNION STRATEGY STILL REMAINS UNCERTAIN, HOWEVER MANY RANK AND FILE TEACHERS SUPPORT DEFIANCE OF LAW AND SOME OBSERVERS EVEN SUGGEST GOVT MOVE MAY BACKFIRE AND RALLY WORKERS TO MASS DEFIANCE.

2. DEMONSTRATION OBSERVED BY CONSULAR OFFICER WENT OFF PEACEFULLY WITH LARGE POLICE CONTINGENCY STANDY BY. ATHOUGH ORGANIZED BY ANGLOPHONE TEACHERS FROM ACROSS PROVINCE, DEMONSTRATION DREW SUBSTANTIAL FRANCOPHONE PARTICIPATION. IN FACT, SPEECHES AND PLACARDS INDICATED FRANCOPHONE MAJORITY. HOSPITAL WORKER MEMBERS OF THE CNTU ALSO JOINED IN MARCH WHICH WAS HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANOTHER
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IN SERIES OF 24-HOUR COMMON FRONT WALKOUTS. 137,000 JOINED

THE LARGEST WALK-OUT SINCE MARCH 22 STEP-UP IN PROTEST
ACTIVITY.

3. IN PASSING LAW GOVT MADE SOME CONCESSIONS TO PARTI
QUEBECOIS, DELAYING EFFECTIVE DATE UNTIL APRIL 11 AND
DELETING UNION LOSS OF ACCREDITATION CLAUSE. INSTEAD UNIONS
WILL BE DEPRIVED OF DUES VIA PAYROLL DEDUCTION FOR A
PERIOD OF 3 TO 12 MONTHS IF FOUND IN DISOBEDIENCE OF LAW.
GOVT ALSO LOWERED MAXIMUM FINE FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO FAIL
TO REPORT TO WORK FROM 500 DOLLARS TO 250 DOLLARS.

4. COMMENT: NEXT STEP BY UNIONS WILL BE CRUCIAL. IF THEY
OBEY LAW, THEIR BARGAINING STRENGTH AS WELL AS THAT OF THE
COMMON FRONT AS A WHOLE WILL BE CONSIDERABLY DIMINISHED. IF
THEY DEFY LAW EN MASSE, ONUS WILL BE ON GOQ TO PROSECUTE
THOUSAND OR BACK DOWN. COMMON FRONT LEADERS, YVON CHARBON-
NEU OF TEACHERS UNION AND MARCEL PEPIN WHOSE CADRE
CONSISTS PRIMARILY OF HOSPITAL WORKERS, ARE SPEAKING IN
TOUGH TERMS BUT STOPPING SHORT OF PREACHING OPEN DEFIANCE.
HOWEEVER SOME LOCAL LEADERS LIKE JACK JOHNSON OF THE
PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATION OF PROTESTANT TEACHERS AS WELL AS
MANY RANK AND FILE ARE READY TO WALK OUT AND DEFY NEW
LAW. OTHERS ADVOCATE SUBTLE DEFIANCE WITHIN CLASSROOMS.
WEEKEND MEETINGS SCHEDULED BY UNIONS SHOULD SET STRATEGY
AND SET STAGE FOR NEXT ROUND IN GOVT-UNION CONTRACT STRUGGLE.
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